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795 563 front towards the Chinese and the rest of the world, and in this unity (as also in the case of the unity of the Catholic Church) lies their amazing strength today. I have heard the Chinese compare both Islam and the Catholic Church to vast world-wide secret societies bound together for purposes of mutual benefit and protection against the rest of mankind. At present the Moslems of North West China, though unsupported by the Treaties of any Foreign Powers, and in spite of the terrible set back after the rebellion, have acquired by their own efforts a privileged and independent position, and indeed are now the principal power in the province.

784 The various sects and classes seem to differ a good deal in the strictness of their observance of the tenets of their religion. Abstention from pork seems universal, and many abstain also from wine, opium, and even tobacco. The Ramadan fast is carefully kept by the upper classes, but 551 not so strictly by the lower. Every Moslem appears to 191 have an Arabic as well as a Chinese name, but a knowledge of the former language is confined to a few Ahongs and scholars. The Koran is read in Arabic. All classes hold keenly to their religion, and their religious centres are visited from time to time by priests from Turkey, Arabia, and 563 Central Asia. They keep aloof from the Chinese, whom they consider unclean, and do not usually frequent the Govern- 582 ment schools. They occasionally take Chinese wives, but 783 the latter have to be cleansed before marriage externally and internally by a course of baths and water drinking. The veiling of their women is not, I believe, practised in other 291 parts of China, but in Kansu we saw veiled women on two or three occasions, each time travelling on the road. The 356 superiority of the Moslems over the Chinese in regard to housing, food, personal cleanliness, and general standard of living is marked, and their spotlessly clean and well-kept mosques (*Lipai Ssu*) are in striking contrast to the dirty 346 and dilapidated temples of the Chinese. These mosques are Chinese-style buildings, and in this respect as in most others they have created a Chinese Mahomedan Church. 634 Though the magistrates in the Mahomedan districts are Chinese, they usually refrain from any interference with the Mahomedans, who appear to manage their own affairs through a sort of local government.